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SENSITIVE  
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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/PPD, EUR/RUS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN'S EIGHTH EURASIAN MEDIA FORUM:  
OUT-TAKES

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) Dr. (sic) Dariga Nazarbayeva organized (or at least it was organized in her name), the Eighth Eurasian Media Forum, April 23-24, in Almaty, co-sponsored by CNN and "The International Herald Tribune," with support from EuroNews and a large number of other international media, media-related, and other businesses. U.S. participants included Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele, former U.S. Congressman and NBC news analyst Harold Ford, former USUN Ambassador (and former Ambassador to Afghanistan and Iraq) Zalmay Khalilzad, and several other lesser but probably worthy lights.

¶3. (SBU) Those who had attended previous years' events noted this eighth iteration was significantly scaled back because of the global financial crisis. Still, the usual MC presided -- Riz Khan, former CNN correspondent currently with Al-Jazeera (English). His opening monologue each day employed many U.S.-specific political-commentary jokes, but left most of the audience scratching their heads, especially once his shtick went through translation into Russian, because English-Russian word-play jokes notoriously fall flat in translation.

¶4. (SBU) President Nazarbayev was originally scheduled to give the welcome speech, but the final schedule distributed at the last minute noted the welcome speech would be delivered "on behalf of President Nazarbayev." The deliverer was State Secretary Kanat Saudabayev, reputedly one of Nazarbayev's closest confidants. Saudabayev's speech had very little, if anything, to do with international media. Instead, it was a well-reasoned message in support of international non-proliferation, clearly a nod to the United States and other Western partners, both to support the Obama Administration's non-proliferation priorities and to burnish President Nazarbayev's global non-proliferation credentials in his alleged effort to be considered for the Nobel Peace Prize. We talked to Saudabayev's speech writer later who,

somewhat sheepishly, confirmed both these goals.

15. (SBU) When Dariga Nazrabayeva subsequently took the stage for her welcome comments, she grimly "thanked the President of Kazakhstan for his words." The back-story here is that Q, once the golden girl for the future leadership, has been sidelined politically because of her (former) marriage to Rakhat Aliyev, who is now Nazarbayev's mortal enemy-supremo. (Besides that, she tumbled this year out of the Forbes' list of international billionaires.) In the medieval-khan, blood-feud-to-the-death battle between Nazarbayev and Aliyev, Nazarbayev decreed that Dariga had to divorce Rakhat Aliyev, even though she is said to have more than a soft spot for her former husband, and, some say, might even bolt to the other side -- except that Nazarbayev has taken up her first son, his namesake, as a new favorite. Even more intriguing, word on the street is that Nazarbayev is now not averse to letting it be known that Dariga is "only" his step-daughter, being the off-spring of his official wife from a previous liaison. The real facts are hard to determine because both sides -- Nazarbayev and Aliyev, with Dariga caught in the middle -- have engaged international public relations firms to do battle against each other. And yet Dariga is not without her friends. At the Media Forum, two female members of parliament hovered around her like mother hens, including former Minister of Justice Baliyeva, who was recently demoted to be a member of parliament.

16. (SBU) Back to the Media Forum. As usual at such events, the initial presentations in each session were generally reasonable and innocuous -- but not all. Both for the record, and for a degree of amusement, certain statements

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follow. Without doubt, the most outrageous panel participant was Igor Panarin, described as a "doctor of geopolitical analysis and member of the faculty of the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Foreign Ministry." He alleged the following:

-- Since the U.S. Administration of President Bill Clinton, there has been no difference between the U.S. political parties. The secret plan is in place and is being implemented by the permanent foreign policy cabal of Washington to dominate the world.

-- The collapse of the "five totalitarian bankers of Wall Street" (sic) marks the beginning of the destruction of Imperial America and the equal destruction of global U.S.-led capitalism.

-- September 8, 2008 (the Russian invasion of Georgia), was a glorious date in world history, because it marked the beginning of the spiritual reintegration of the former Soviet peoples.

-- The U.S. dollar will collapse and disappear by August 2009, opening the way for a global currency the following year that will be based on the currencies of Russia, China, Japan, and maybe the European Union. Further, within a few years the United States will likely disintegrate into a loose commonwealth of mutually antagonistic regional powers. Proof for this is the recent call by the Governor of Texas to secede his state from the Union, as well as percentages in Vermont and North Carolina who favor secession.

NOTE: Chairman of Kazakhstan's National Bank, Grigoriy Marchenko, well known for not suffering fools gladly, raked his fingers through his hair, ostentatiously rubbed his neck, and stared at the ceiling during Panarin's wild-eyed presentation. END NOTE.

17. (SBU) Relatively less loony, and rational more often than not, was Gaidar Djemal, Chairman of the Islamic Committee of Russia. Still, he had his colorful moments:

-- The defeat of the Soviet Union didn't fully satisfy the

people of the world, including in Europe. They want the "Final Solution" against the Homeland (rodina). There is now a great vacuum because American Imperialism has failed. Russia is re-emerging as the great world power that will organize and lead "the lesser nations."

-- When we speak of the nuclear problem in Iran, we should not forget the attitude of the United States. Obama, like Bush, still supports regime change in Tehran. The U.S. nuclear concern is nothing more than a pretense to restructure Iranian politics against Russia's interests. Obama is not concerned about nuclear weapons in Iran -- he wants to achieve the final destruction of Russia.

-- Obama has turned the initial Russian liberal-democratic joy about his election into bitter ashes in their mouths. He's signaled they don't matter to him. They now understand his cynical rejection of the forces of Russian democracy in favor of the final humiliation -- the thorough disarmament of Great Russia.

18. (SBU) Lest it appear we are dumping only on Russian participants in the Eurasian Media Forum, Alexander Rahr, Program Director for Russia/Eurasia of the German Council on Foreign Relations, said, "I have no doubt that Obama has a secret agreement with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) for the SCO to step into Afghanistan as soon as NATO fails. The goal will appear to be to empower Russia and China to be the power arbiters of Eurasia, but the real goal

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will be to bog them down in the 'graveyard of empires.'"

19. (SBU) Finally, we want to take note of an older Kazakhstani intellectual who rose to thunder an impassioned, grandly self-important, extraordinarily repetitive intervention (until he was cut off by the Chinese moderator), demanding to know: "Why are we wasting time with all these different points of view when we should be developing instructions for the journalists here so that they know what to publish tomorrow!"

110. (SBU) COMMENT: We want to acknowledge that the public goals of the Eurasian Media Forum -- to bring together leaders and thinkers to promote international understanding -- are laudable. At the same time, we acknowledge that we, like Grigoriy Marchenko, don't suffer fools gladly. Maybe all international fora are subject to a degree of public-intellectual ideological posturing. This one, however, seems to have had more than its fair share of fools. On the other hand, it was an interesting exposure to public opinion. END COMMENT.  
HOAGLAND